

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6334

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1782

EXDIS

E.O.11652: XGDS

TW

S: OVIP (SCHLESINGER, JAMES), PFOR,NFH

SUBJECT: SCHLESINGER PARTY TALKS,PROVINCIAL GRAND TOUR CANCELLED

REF: PEKING 1776

ACTION REQUESTED: NOTIFY S OF INFO IN PARA 5.

1. WHEN NEWS OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED, THE SCHLESINGER PARTY WAS OBSERVING A MARKSMANSHIP SHOW BY THE PLA'S 3RD DIVISION ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PEKING. DESPITE THE SUDDEN INTERRUPTION OF THE INTERNATIONALE AND THE TEARS WELLING UP IN THE EYES OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THE PROGRAM WAS CARRIED THROUGH TO COMPLETION. IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, THE CHINESE ANNOUNCED THE NEWS TO THE AMERICANS INDIVIDUALLY. THE URBAN US DESK DIRECTOR TING YUAN-HUNG,

NORMALLY FLUENT IN ENGLISH, COULD ONLY SOB OUT IN CHINESE THAT "CHAIRMAN MAO HAS DIED." OTHER CHINESE OFFICIALS UNASHAMEDLY WEPT.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT THE HOST ORGANIZATION CHINESE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (CPIFA) BOWED OUT AS EFFECTIVE HOSTS, DEFERRING TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS PRESENT. AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR LIN PING, WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED THE PARTY TO THE PLA UNIT, EXPLAINED THAT "UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES" THE MEETINGS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED WITH DEFENSE MINISTER YEH AND PREMIER HUA (REFTEL) HAD BEEN CANCELLED. LIN ADDED THAT THE GROUP'S ENTIRE

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PROVINCIAL TOUR WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE CANCELLED.

3. LIN, CLEARLY SPEAKING WITHOUT GUIDANCE, NOTED THAT FOREIGN DIGNITARIES NOT ALREADY IN CHINA WOULD NOT BE INVITED TO ATTEND THE MEMORIAL CEREMONIES AND SUGGESTED --"ON THE BASIS OF THE PRECEDENTS ESTABLISHED FOR THE CHOU EN-LAI AND CHU TEN FUNERAL OBSERVANCES" -- THAT DR. SCHLESINGER MIGHT WISH TO RETURN IN PEKING TO PAY LAST RESPECTS TO CHAIRMAN MAO.

4. DR. SCHLESINGER INDICATED TO THE CHINESE THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW THEIR JUDGMENT AS TO APPROPRIATE ACTIONS. IN THE MEANTIME, THE CPIFA HAS ARRANGED FOR THE DELEGATION TO VISIT THE GREAT WALL ON SEPTEMBER 10.

5. ONE DELEGATION MEMBER HAS CONFIDED TO US THAT DR. SCHLESINGER WILL PROBABLY PLACE A CALL TO SECRETARY KISSINGER IN THE MORNING (APPROXIMATELY 0800 SEPTEMBER 10 LOCAL TIME) TO SOLICIT HIS ADVICE ON AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION.
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